

REMARKS

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the finding by the Examiner that claim 7 contains patentable subject matter. The subject matter of claim 7, along with the limitations of its base claim, independent claim 6, has been incorporated into new independent claim 12.

The Examiner, however, has rejected claims 1-6 and 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neumann (U.S. Patent No. 1,638,003) in view of Solis (U.S. Patent No. 5,087,034).

In the present response, claims 1 and 6 have been amended, and new claim 12 has been added. Upon entry of the amendment, claims 1-12 constitute the pending claims in the present application. Applicant requests reconsideration in view of the following remarks and foregoing amendment.

35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has found claims 1-6 and 8-11 to be obvious over Neumann in view of Solis. However, in view of the above amendment, Applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 6 are no longer rendered obvious by Neumann in view of Solis.

In particular, independent claim 1 now recites a device having, among other things, *a connector at each end of the handle for engaging a hook of a countering force*. Similarly, independent claim 6 now recites device having *a connector at an end of each handle adjacent the recess for engaging a hook of a countering force*. Support for the amendment can be found in paragraph 18 (page 6), paragraph 20 (page 7), and paragraph 22 (page 8).

In contrast, Neuman fails to teach a device having a connector at each end of the handle for engaging a hook of a countering force, such as that set forth in present claim 1, or a connector at an end of each handle adjacent the recess for engaging a hook of a countering force, as set forth in present claim 6. In addition, a close reading of Neumann shows that there is neither any teaching nor disclosure that permits the device therein to be modified to include such a connector.

Solis, similarly, fails to teach a device having a connector in the manner set forth in amended claims 1 and 6. Thus even if one could combine Neumann with Solis, the resulting device would be dissimilar to the ones set forth in presents claims 1 and 6.

Since both Neumann and Solis fail to teach or suggest the connector of independent claims 1 and 6, Applicants submit that these claims cannot be rendered obvious by Neumann in view of Solis.

Claims 2-5 are dependent from claim 1 and claims 7-11 are dependent from claim 6. As such, they must be read to include the limitations set forth in their respective independent claim. To that end, the comments provided above in connection with claim 1 and 6 are hereby repeated. Accordingly, claims 2-5 and 7-11 cannot be rendered obvious by Neumann in view of Solis.

New Claim

New independent claim 12 has been added to further define certain novel feature the present invention. In particular, independent claim 12 has incorporated the subject matter of claim 7 with base claim 6, in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, claim 12, as provided, is in condition for allowance.

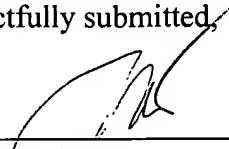
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the pending claims are not rendered obvious by Neumann or Thompson alone or in combination.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the pending rejections, and early and favorable reconsideration are respectfully solicited. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecute and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (617) 310-6000.

Applicant does not believe that any extension or additional fee is required in connection with this Response. However, should any extension or fee be required, Applicant hereby petitions for same and requests that such and any other fee required for timely consideration of this application be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2678.

Respectfully submitted,



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